

## Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EUR-25 IO-12 OMB-01 AID-20 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 DPW-01 RSR-01 /141 W

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R 160403 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0191

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 6392

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: WEEKLY SITREP REPORT FOR APRIL 8-14, 1973

THE FOLLOWING SENT SAIGON FROM CAN THO 14 APR 73

REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION AND INFO

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0187

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI, MOPS, PINT, CA, CB, HU, ID, PL, VS

SUBJECT: WEEKLY SITREP REPORT FOR APRIL 8-14, 1973

REFERENCES: (A) CAN THO 0141, (B) CAN THO 0182, (C) CAN THO 0149

1. SUMMARY: COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS WEEK WHICH SAW THE HEAVIEST FIGHTING SINCE THE VC/ NVA CEASEFIRE OFFENSIVE, THERE WAS A DOWN-SWING IN THE INTENSITY OF MILITARY ACTIVITY DURING THE APRIL 8-14 PERIOD. FIGHTING NEAR HONG NGU AREA ALSO SUBSIDED, BUT INCREASED AND EFFECTIVE ENEMY ATTENTION IN THE AREA STOPPED CONVOY TRAFFIC TO PHNOM PENH VIA THE NEARBY MEKONG. AS A RESULT OF THE LAO BAO AND VI THANH HELICOPTER INCIDENTS, CANADIAN AND INDONESIAN ICCS MEMBERS ARE SHOWING INCREASED CONCERN ABOUT ICCS SECURITY. POLISH-HUNGARIAN OBSTRUCTION CONTINUES UNABATED. MR IV RVNAF COMMANDERS ARE EXPRESSING UNIFORM, PERHAPS ORCHESTRATED INDICATIONS THAT THE  
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CEASEFIRE IS STRENGTHENING VC/ NVA FORCES AT THE EXPENSE OF RVNAF.  
THIS EXPRESSION OF CONCERN DOVETAILED WITH A MORE OFFENSIVE RVNAF

POSTURE DURING THE PAST WEEK. END SUMMARY.

2. SECURITY SITUATION ( A) THE LEVEL OF FIGHTING IN MR IV

DURING APRIL 8-14, MOST NOTABLY IN THE HONG NGU AREA, DECLINED IN INTENSITY FROM THAT OF THE PREVIOUS WEEK. ACTION REMAINED HEAVIEST IN CHUONG THIEN, KIEN PHONG AND DINH TUONG. THE UNFAVORABLE TREND REFLECTED IN THE DAILY ENEMY/ RVNAF KILL RATIO WHICH STARTED SEVERAL WEEKS AGO ( REF C) CONTINUES. CASUALTIES REMAINED HIGH AND THE DAILY AVERAGE FAR EXCEEDED THE POST-CEASEFIRE NORM OF 20 RVNAF KIA AND 100 WIA.

( B). MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE HONG NGU AREA WAS RELATIVELY LOW COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS THREE WEEKS' ACTIVITY. HOWEVER, NVA/ VC FORCES CONTINUED THEIR ATTACKS BY FIRE ON SCATTERED OUTPOSTS. IN AN ATTEMPT TO CLOSE ONE OF THE LAST SUPPLY LINES TO PHNOM PENH, TWO BATTALIONS OF THE NVA 272 REGIMENT, POSSIBLY WITH ELEMENTS OF THE 75 TH ARTILLERY REGIMENT, ARE REPORTED TO HAVE DEPLOYED ALONG THE EASTERN BANK OF THE MEKONG BETWEEN HONG NGU AND THE CAMBODIAN BORDER. DESPITE ARVN CLEARING OPERATIONS INVOLVING A REGIMENT SIZE FORCE FROM THE 9 TH DIVISION, ENEMY ACTIVITY IN THIS AREA AS OF APRIL 14 HAS BLOCKED THE MOVEMENT OF CONVOY TRAFFIC TO PHNOM PENH.

3. ICCS: ( A) CANADIAN AND INDONESIAN MEMBERS ARE EXPRESSING GROWING CONCERN OVER THE SAFETY OF THEIR DELEGATIONS AND THE FUTURE OF THE ICCS. TWO DAYS AFTER THE APRIL 7 DOWNING OF TWO ICCS HELICOPTERS IN QUANG TRI, A GVN HELICOPTER ESCORTING AN ICCS HELICOPTER WAS FORCED DOWN BY HOSTILE GROUND FIRE IN DHUONG THIEN. AN NVA PRISONER ATTACHED TO AN ANTI- AIRCRAFT UNIT WAS INTERVIEWED BY THE CANADIAN AND INDONESIAN REGION VII DELEGATIONS APRIL 10. THE LEADER OF THE INDONESIAN DELEGATION TOLD A CONGEN OFFICER THAT THE PRISONER HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE ICCS. HE OPINED THAT SUCH IGNORANCE, IF WIDESPREAD, INCREASED ENORMOUSLY THE HAZARDS FACED BY ICCS MEMBERS.

( B) THE CANADIANS AND INDONESIANS CONTINUE TO BE FRUSTRATED BY POLISH- HUNGARIAN TACTICS OF BOSTRUCTION. FRICTION AND  
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HEATED ARGUMENTS BETWEEN THE TWO SETS OF DELEGATIONS RATHER THAN COOPERATION, OFTEN CHARACTERIZE ICCS MEETINGS AT BOTH THE REGION AND SUB- REGIONAL LEVELS. AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE CANADIANS AND INDONESIANS ARE CONDUCTING MORE OF THEIR OWN INVESTIGATIONS AND REPORTS. BY THUS SEPARATING THEMSELVES FROM THE COMMUNIST DELEGATIONS, THEY HOPE TO SPOTLIGHT THE LATTER AS THE SOURCE OF ICCS DIFFICULTIES.

4. COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES: ( A) A MORE AGGRESSIVE RVNAF POSTURE,

PERHAPS COUPLED WITH RENEWED US BOMBING IN CAMBODIA, MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE DECREASE IN ENEMY INITIATED ACTIVITY ALONG THE CAMBODIAN BORDER COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS WEEK. AS FIGHTING IN THE NONG NGU- TAN CHAU- GAI CAI AREA ABATES, HOWEVER, RVNAF COMMANDERS ARE SHOWING INCREASED CONCERN ABOUT REPORTED MOVEMENT OF ENEMY UNITS ALONG THE KIEN PHONG- KIEN TUONG INFILTRATION CORRIDOR TOWARDS DINH TUONG.

(B) EMULATING THE GVN POST- CEASEFIRE POLICY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, ENEMY " NIBBLING" ACTIVITIES ARE STEPPING UP NEAR VC CONTROLLED AREAS IN AN XUYEN, SOUTHERN BAC LIEU AND CHUONG THIEN. INCREASED INCIDENTS, CASUALTIES, AND OVERRUN OUTPOSTS OCCURRED IN EACH AREA. WHILE EXPANSION OF AREA AND POPULATION CONTROL IS STILL THE VC' S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE, IN BAC LIEU AND AN XUYEN THE VC MAYBE TRYING TO SECURE SHALLOW DRAFT SUPPLY PORTS.

5. GVN ACTIVITIES: (A) DURING THE WEEK OF APRIL 8-14, STATEMENTS OF RVNAF COMMANDERS ( SEE REFTELS A AND B) AND THE ADOPTION OF A MORE AGGRESSIVE POSTURE WITH RESPECT TO NVA/ VC POSITIONS AND SUPPLY LINES INDICATE THAT THE MILITARY STRICTURES OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT ARE BECOMING EVEN LESS RELEVANT THEN HERETOFORE IN MR IV. ON APRIL 11, AN RVNAF SMALL UNIT OPERATION WAS REPORTED AT THE MR IV BRIEFING TO HAVE CROSSED THE CAMBODIAN BORDER ABOVE HONG NGU. THE SAME DAY IN KIEN GIANG, INCIDENTS SAID TO HAVE INVOLVED " ATTACKS " ON RANGER UNITS AT LOCATIONS RESTING EXACTLY ON THE CAMBODIAN BORDER RESULTED IN FIVE ENEMY KIA AND NO FRIENDLY CASUALTIES. FURTHER INSIDE SOUTH VIET NAM BUT IN AN AREA TRADITIONALLY USED BY THE NVA AS A WAY- STATION FROM CAMBODIA TO THE U MINH BASE AREA IN AN XUYEN, QW RIILAR " ATTACK" ON A RANGER UNIT REPORTEDLY PRODUCED 44 ENEMY KIA AND A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF WEAPONS CAPTURED. ON APRIL 13, THE 31 ST REGIMENT OF THE 21 ST ARVN DIVISION WAS INSERTED INTO SOUTHERN CHUONG THIEN AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE MAIN NVA/ VC SUPPLY ARTERY OUT OF THE U MINH TO THE NORTHERN XX DELTA. CONFIDENTIAL

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(B). MEANWHILE, GVN PACIFICATION EFFORTS NEAR GVN CONTROLLED POPULATED AREAS OF THE DELTA CONTINUE IN THE FORM OF OUTPOST BUILDING AND SECTOR OPERATIONS. PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY HAS BEEN THE POST- CEASEFIRE OUTPOST CONSTRUCTION IN KIEN HOA' S VC BASE AREA 490. TWENTY OUTPOSTS HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED, THIRTY- FIVE ARE PLANNED. IN ADDITION, NEW TERRITORIAL FORCE UNITS WERE DEPLOYED WITHIN THE RECENTLY CREATED SPECIAL TACTICAL AREA ALONG THE TRADITIONALLY CONTESTED EASTERN BAC LIEU- BA XUYEN BORDER. BARNES UNQUOTE. BUNKER

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